

*Meeting opened at 11am on 19/8/21.*

MINUTES

**A. Attendance**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Proxy</u>
President	Marni O'Connell	
Treasurer:	Bailey Webb	
Secretary:	Joshua Pelach	
Education (Public Affairs):	Alex Bourikas	
Education (Academic Affairs):	Charlee Hawkes	Renee Meaney
Activities:	Sean Hanna	Fergus Smith
CLA:	Nick Broussard	
Welfare:	Thanura Ediri	
Indigenous:	Isobella Kruger	Olivia Snell
Environment & Social Justice:	Georgia Saunders	
Women's:	Chloe Yeats	
Queer:	Amber Hodgson	Kieran Couchman
Disabilities & Carers:	Tiana Sixsmith	Matilda Conlan
People of Colour:	Linh Thai	
Res Community Department:	Lily Van Berkel	Ben Chaney
MUISS:	Sejuti Saha	
MAPS:	Jan Morgiewicz	
Clubs & Societies:	Francesco Barrese	
Radio Monash:	Giorgia Cahoon	Gabriella Mountjoy
General Representative:	Eva Scopelliti	
General Representative:	Ishka de Silva	
General Representative:	Dzemaal Efendic	
General Representative:	Grace Ang	Josh Strauss
General Representative:	Lucy Bandiera	

*Marni: I would like to make some preliminary comments before we start. I hope everyone is doing well in this difficult time. I would like to address the legal advice which was sent out to members of MSC this morning regarding a motion that would be invalid. In order to ensure democratic elections could take place despite the very real and dangerous COVID risks, and to ensure that students are able to participate across the globe, especially international students who face incredibly different and often more severe circumstances, MSA decided to run the 2021 MSA Elections online. This was a decision of absolute necessity based on the advice of the Monash Chief Medical Officer. This decision allows all students to still campaign, engage with elections, and access the ability to vote. We have made it very clear that we are incredibly excited for on-campus campaigning to return as soon as it is safe to do so, which will hopefully be in time for next year's election.*

*As per the legal advice we have received, any attempts to change the election regulations once the election has been called would be illegal. Obviously, MSC cannot do something that is illegal. Therefore, this motion is out of order and cannot be considered. This is not a matter of debate, but rather a matter of following the letter of the law. There is nothing further to say on this matter.*

**B. Acknowledgment of traditional owners of land**

This MSC acknowledges and pays respect to the people of the Kulin nations as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this land. The MSA commits itself to actively fight alongside Indigenous peoples for reconciliation and justice for all Indigenous Australians.

**C. Confirmation of Agenda Order**

Confirmed

**D. Office Bearer and Divisional Reports**

<a href="#">MUISS</a>
<a href="#">Clubs &amp; Societies</a>
<a href="#">Indigenous</a>
<a href="#">Residential Communities</a>
<a href="#">People of Colour</a>
<a href="#">Radio Monash</a>
<a href="#">Welfare</a>
<a href="#">MAPS</a>
<a href="#">Education (Public Affairs)</a>

**Motion #1:**

That this MSC accepts all submitted office-bearer and divisional reports en bloc.

**Moved:** Nick Broussard

**Seconded:** Ishka De Silva

**FOR: 24**

**AGAINST: 0**

**ABSTAIN: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**E. Financial Motions**

**Motion #2:**

This MSC moves to accept the [MSA Financial Statement](#) for July 2021.

**Moved:** Bailey Webb

**Seconded:** Joshua Pelach

**FOR: 24**

**AGAINST: 0**

**ABSTAIN: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**F. Referendum on Queer Department**

Motion to call a referendum on the Queer Department

Preamble: In 2020, a referendum was successfully passed to amend clause 32(3) of the Constitution to read: *“At least 1 person holding the position of Queer Officer must identify as female and/or be transgender or gender diverse”*. However, the way that “female and/or be transgender or gender diverse” is phrased is no longer regarded as the most inclusive language. In consultation with the MSA Queer Department, a referendum has been proposed to amend that language to ensure it is properly inclusive.

**Motion #3:**

That this MSC:

- Calls a referendum to be held concurrently with the 2021 MSA Elections, to amend cl.32(3) to read: *“The Queer Officer must be directly elected by and from self-identified queer students. No more than 1 cisgender man may hold the position of Queer Officer.”*
- Appoints Gavin Ryan as the Returning Officer
- Directs the Returning Officer to incorporate the following referendum question into the 2021 MSA Election platform: *“Do you agree that the requirements for Queer Officer should change from ‘at least 1 person must identify as female and/or be transgender or gender diverse’ to ‘no more than 1 cisgender man may hold the position of Queer Officer’?”*

**Moved:** Kieran Couchman

**Seconded:** Bailey Webb

*Bailey: based on discussions with the queer officers Amber and Kieran, we have decided to put forward another referendum to ensure that the wording is as inclusive as possible.*  
*Alevine: I just think it's pretty concerning that 800 students have signed a petition calling for a student general meeting, and that meeting has been deleted-*  
*Marni: please ensure that you are speaking on the relevant motion*  
*Aisha: I am really confused as to why there was no discussion on the statement you made at the beginning. 800 students have-*  
*Marni: that is not relevant to the current motion.*  
*Jayden: we are exhausting every avenue of democracy available to us, and in this meeting you are muting us if we-*  
*Marni: I would like to remind everyone to speak to the motion in question*  
*Beck: it seems that MSA does not want to publicly defend the regulations-*  
*John: are you going to give us any opportunity to speak on this matter-*  
*Marni: as I have said, you must speak to the relevant motion.*

**FOR: 24**  
**AGAINST: 0**  
**ABSTAIN: 0**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

## **G. Policy-based Motions**

### Motion to support student mental health during lockdown

Preamble: due to past and ongoing lockdowns, there has been a significant decline in mental health amongst students. The MSA has been actively supporting students throughout this hard time and encourages any affected by any type of hardship to reach out for support.

A gap identified within the THRIVE surveys was that students were more likely to go to friends when seeking support regarding mental health issues and these friends did not have the right knowledge or experience to support the people in need.

In response to this gap, the Welfare Department proposed a new scenario-based training program aimed at equipping students with the skills and knowledge to be able to respond to mental health scenarios more confidently and appropriately. This proposal has been approved by the University and the Welfare Office Bearers are working with Monash Counselling and Mental Health Services to design this training.

#### **Motion #4:**

This MSC moves to support the work done by the MSA Welfare Department in bettering the experiences of the students at Monash and ensuring that students feel supported during mental health hardship.

**Moved:** Thanura Ediri

**Seconded:** Josh Strauss

*Thanura: as Marni explained, the lockdown has taken a huge toll on students. We are designing training at the moment, and I put up a post on Stalkerspace for people to provide feedback, so please feel free to sign up to the advisory committee if interested.*

**FOR: 24**  
**AGAINST: 0**  
**ABSTAIN: 0**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

Motion to campaign for compassionate education policy

Preamble: the threat to Victorians as a result of COVID-19 is as alive as it has ever been. The recent outbreaks across Australia have shown just how infectious and lethal the Delta variant can be, including a rise in deaths among young people and ever-increasing case numbers, despite lockdown measures. Until Australia's bungled vaccine rollout gets back on track, students will continue to face no certainty and severe social isolation in undertaking their studies. MSA will continue to fight to ensure that the Academic Safety Net measures which MSA helped to secure in Semester 1 are wholly extended into Semester 2.

**Motion #5:**

This MSC moves to commend the work of the Education Team in:

- Working collaboratively with Kris Ryan and other members of the Education Committee to develop policies to ensure that undergraduate students who sit exams involving extended responses receive adequate exam script viewing time
- Continuing to fight for a full extension of the Academic Safety Net into Semester 2, including the ability for students to have their results excluded from their WAM and academic transcript, given the continuing lockdown situation in Victoria

**Moved:** Renee Meaney      **Seconded:** Alex Bourikas

*Kelly: I think this meeting has been pretty concerning. Why has there been no discussion of the petition that 800 students signed-*

*Marni: unfortunately, that is not relevant to the motion.*

*Jayden: it is completely undemocratic that 800 students-*

*Matt: you aren't letting us talk about the fact that you banned democracy on campus-*

*Marni: we are going to go to a vote as it appears that nobody is speaking to the relevant motion.*

**FOR: 24**  
**AGAINST: 0**  
**ABSTAIN: 0**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

Motion of support for the Performing Arts Sector

Preamble: COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the performing Arts industry. Fluctuating restrictions and snap lockdowns have rendered it difficult for performers to take part in the events they would otherwise be running. The brunt of this issue has certainly been felt among Monash students, especially across the School of Music, the Monash Dance Team and MSA's own Student Theatre (MUST). There is a growing need for the government to provide financial support to artists whose livelihoods have been destroyed.

**Motion #6:**

This MSC moves to:

- Emphasise MSA's support for the performing arts and the critical contribution they make to Australian society
- Call on the Federal Government to provide financial support to artists for as long as restrictions continue to impede their craft
- Continue to fight for the restoral of the Centre for Theatre and Performance, and a commitment to the preservation of performing arts at Monash
- Provide support to MUST in continuing its brilliant work in nurturing Monash Student talent, and the Creative and Live Arts Department in its efforts to promote student artists

**Moved:** Nick Broussard

**Seconded:** Eva Scopelliti

*John: I agree that we should support the performing arts sector, but at this point this meeting has become a fu\*king theatre-*

*Marni: please avoid swearing.*

*Luka: when is MSA going to meet its constitutional obligation to call an SGM-*

*Elliot: how are students meant to give feedback on the regulations you put forward?*

**FOR: 24**  
**AGAINST: 0**  
**ABSTAIN: 0**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

Motion of solidarity with Afghan students and the people of Afghanistan

Preamble: The recent withdrawal of ISAF forces from Afghanistan after two decades of conflict and over 170,000 deaths, has left the world in shock.

Thousands of Afghans are already attempting to flee the country and seek asylum, fearing a return to the harsh conditions under Taliban rule. Recent events at the International Airport in Kabul highlighted the seriousness of the issue, resulting in at least seven deaths.

This is an incredibly difficult time for Monash students who have friends and family still in Afghanistan. To be coping with the stress of this situation whilst simultaneously having to undertake studies in lockdown would be incredibly difficult. MSA is committed to doing whatever it can to ease the burden these students are experiencing.

**Motion #7:**

This MSC moves to:

- Support Afghan students, and those with friends and relatives in Afghanistan, in this time of fear and uncertainty.
- Provide whatever support services can be offered to those students, and advocate for them to be treated with compassion and empathy as the situation in Afghanistan continues
- Encourage all MSA representatives to sign on to Monash University's Letter of Support for Afghanistan, which calls upon the Australian Government to provide aid and asylum to Afghans and their families:

<https://www.monash.edu/arts/gender-peace-security/letters-supporting-women-in-afghanista>  
[n](#)

**Moved:** Sejuti Saha

**Seconded:** Linh Thai

*Sejuti: I think the motion speaks for itself, but I would like to reiterate its importance. I cannot imagine the hardship that Afghan students are experiencing, and it is essential that we are empathetic and compassionate towards members of the Afghan community.*

*Matt: I think it has been appalling how the Australian government has behaved over the last few years in relation to Afghanistan. I'm sure people have seen the situation with Ben Roberts Smith. We should condemn that major parties that have supported this war and helped create the devastation that we see in Afghanistan.*

*Natalie: it is really sad what is happening at the moment, and it is disappointing that the Australian government has only evacuated 20 people, and there are still Afghan refugees who have been held in detention in Australia for decades.*

*Alevine: it is clear that this is a horrible situation. We need to recognise that what is happening at the moment in Afghanistan traces back to 20 years ago. The US Occupation was always about imperial interests and not establishing democracy. The occupation has massively exacerbated the devastation in Afghanistan. There are a few things which are lacking from this motion, including a call for Australia to immediately increase its refugee intake and grant full citizenship rights to all people fleeing Afghanistan. Australia is one of the richest countries in the world, and there is a lot more that we can do.*

*Jan: I would like to echo what Sejuti said. It is essential that we do anything we can to stand in solidarity with our Afghan brothers, sisters and friends beyond the binary.*

**FOR: 24**  
**AGAINST: 0**  
**ABSTAIN: 0**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **G. General Business**

*Marni: seeing no general business, I will close this meeting.*

**Meeting Closed at 11:28am.**